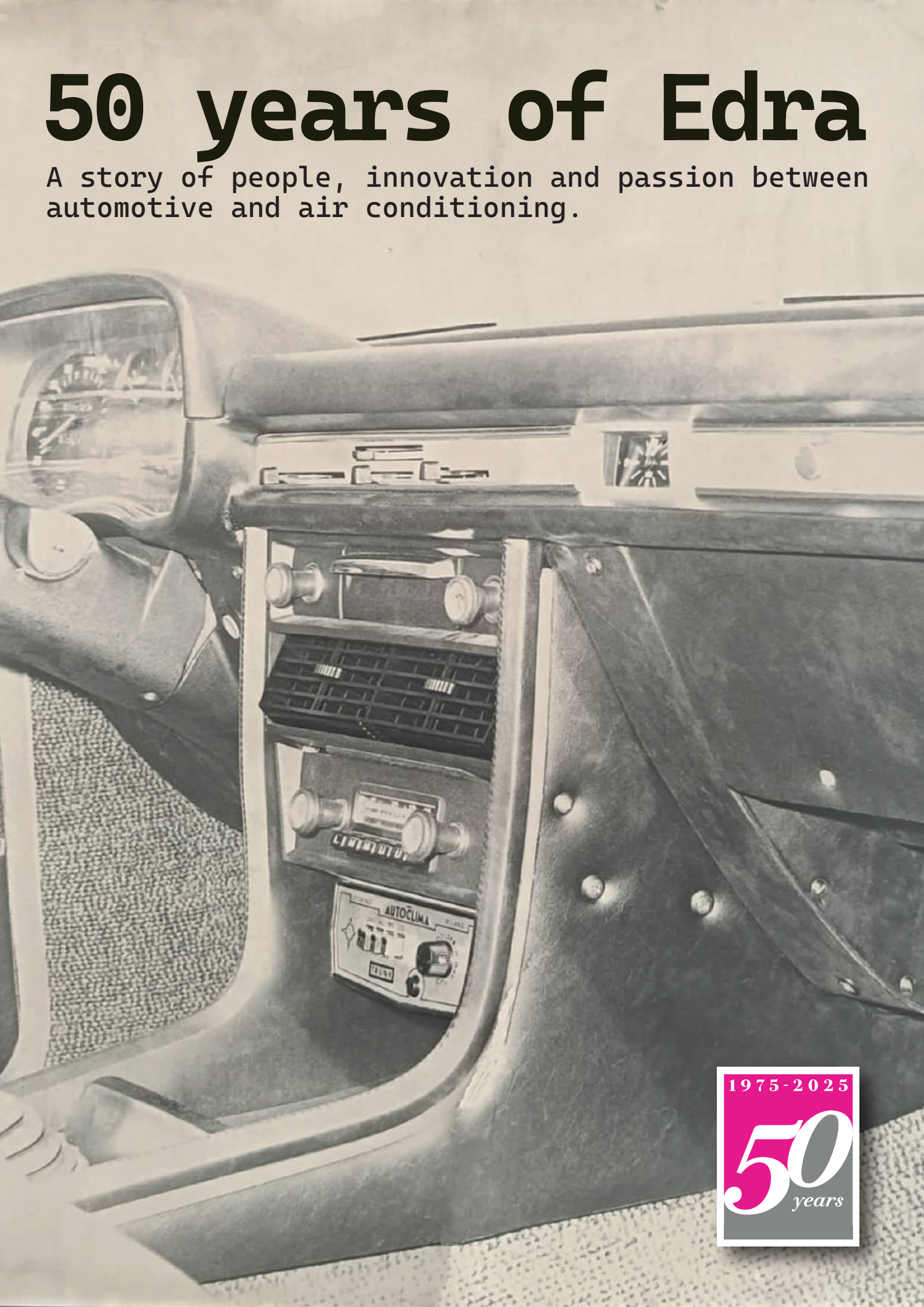
50 years of Edra

A story of people, innovation and passion between automotive and air conditioning.



I am **Marco Gardellini**, CEO of Edra Srl and I have the pleasure, for those who want to read, of telling a beautiful story.

On **March 18, 1975**, in Turin, in a small building within a courtyard on the central Via Frejus, the "**Casa del Condizionatore**" began its activity, which would later become one with Edra.
At that time, Casa del Condizionatore was a pioneering company in promoting a product that was initially intended for a small elite but later evolved into a widely used commodity and is now present in all cars and countless small and large spaces: **the air conditioner.**

The first "aftermarket" auto air conditioners

Exhibition for room air-conditioners in Turin, 1980

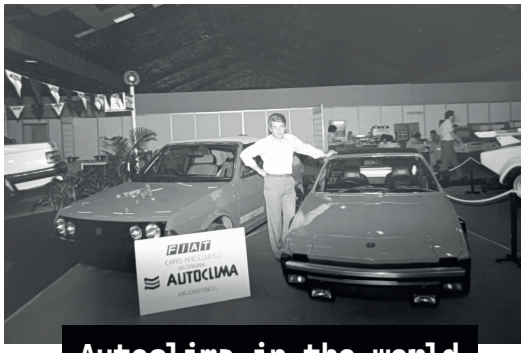
Talking about "air conditioning" in the 1970s was sometimes like talking about ... UFOs!

of Edra

The Casa del Condzionatore workshop

Fitters at work to install an auto aircon

Design of room aircon systems for home and offices



Autoclima in the world

In the workshop on Via Frejus, air conditioners produced by **Autoclima** were installed in cars, while teams of technicians installed those produced by **Ariagel** in homes and businesses. These two companies were directly connected to Casa del Condizionatore under the same ownership, making it, in fact, one of the few and most important points of reference in the province of Turin (and beyond) for this product for many years.

Me and Dino Zoff, Juventus and Italy football player and coach and his Fiat Regata, just air-conditioned

Towards the late 1990s, the air conditioning market became increasingly widespread, and Autoclima and Ariagel were sold to Borletti and De Longhi, respectively. Meanwhile, Edra was founded, initially inheriting from Autoclima the distribution of Lineaccessori Fiat/Alfa/Lancia air conditioning kits (which had become climate control systems!). Although Edra was primarily focused on the distribution of automotive products, it specialized in this activity, gradually adding other manufacturers of systems, spare parts, and specialized equipment for climate service.

The first automatic auto air-conditioners

Exhibition in Singapore, 1995

50 years of Edra

The headquarters on Via Frejus soon became inadequate, and the two companies found a new home in a much larger and more modern facility in the northern area of Turin, the current headquarter.

Casa del Condizionatore was then incorporated into Edra, which maintained its “historic” activities while expanding the distribution of automotive products both in Italy and abroad. In its first two decades, Edra distributed products from Lineaccessori **Fiat/Alfa/Lancia**, **Autosystem**, **Diavia** (now **Webasto**), **CTR** (a historic company in climate spare parts and equipment, no longer in existence), **Sparco**, **Lovato**, **Ellebi** (now Brink, in the towing hitch sector), and **Toshiba**. Later, **Brain Bee**, **Ecotechnics**, **Waeco**, **and Guidosimplex** joined as partners, all of whom have played a significant role in making Edra what you know today.

This is the history of the companies.

But companies are made of people, and while it is impossible to mention everyone who has been part of this journey, some deserve to be remembered because they played a significant role in shaping this beautiful story.

The founders of Autoclima and Ariagel were Engineer Massolo and Dr. Gribaudi, who also owned Casa del Condizionatore. At that time, **Carla Calaon**, my mother, worked there as an employee. When the "flagship" companies were sold, Massolo and Gribaudi also sold Casa del Condizionatore, which was purchased by my family, and my mother became its Administrator. In 1987, I also joined the company.

Carla Calaon

Me, with a lot more hair and a lot less weight

Franco Gardellini, the "President", at Automechanika, Frankfurt, 1996

On 1993, together with my father, **Gianfranco "Franco" Gardellini (affectionately known by everyone as "The President")**, Edra was founded as a company with a strong distribution focus.

Franco brought his vast experience and knowledge to the table, and among many achievements, several key initiatives allowed Edra to take off immediately: the "borderless" distribution of Lineaccessori Fiat/Alfa/Lancia systems, the development of collaborations with Fiat branches worldwide (especially in right-hand-drive Asian markets) for the supply and installation of air conditioning systems in newly manufactured cars that did not yet include factory-installed air conditioning.

Notably, this included the installation of air conditioners in hundreds of Lancia Delta HF, Integrale, and Evo models, as well as over 4,000 Fiat Pandas destined for the Japanese market. Additionally, Edra collaborated with Sparco to distribute Competition and Tuning products across a vast global market, spanning Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe.

me and Franco, Jakarta, 2002

Fiat Panda in progress for aircon

Memories

Asian Sparco Importers Meeting at Edra and Venice, 2000

Malesia, Team Sparco, 1998

Me and Franco, travelling within Asia

Meeting with customers Lovato-Ellebi Reggia di Venaria, 2012

Asian Sparco Importers MeetingKoh Samui 2005

Meeting Diavia, 1999

Meeting Italian workshops at Edra, 2019

In 2011, Franco passed away, and my mother and I continued to manage the company, preserving its unique characteristics and the sectors that define it ("Distribution," "Workshop," and "Room Air-Conditioners"). In 2020, my son **Alessio** also joined the company.

Me with my mother Carla and my son Alessio:
the three generations of Edra.

This is why, even though Edra was founded in 1993, today we feel like we are celebrating **50 years of activity**. This journey has shaped my life since a young age and has been a part of my entire family's history. Even now, we fondly recall those times when, at dinner, we would "**eat bread and Autoclima**."

It wasn't easy to condense 50 years of history into just a few lines, so with a touch of well-earned pride, I raise my glass for a virtual toast with everyone who has been curious enough to read this far.

I'm not one for self-celebration, but I cannot go without thanking my mother, Carla, without whom I would never have entered the world of air conditioning, and my father, Franco, without whom Edra might never have existed.

And a sincere "thank you!" goes to all those who in these 50 years have contributed to the life of Casa del Condizionatore first and Edra today.

Marco Gardellini